

Political action needed to strengthen the governance and efficiency of the European Statistical System

In its fourth annual report the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB), urges the governments and the statistical authorities to further strengthen the governance, the efficiency and the compliance monitoring of the national statistical systems and the European Statistical System (ESS). In the words of the ESGAB Chair, Thomas Wieser: *'It is not until the conditions in law and practice are in place to guarantee the impartiality of statistical authorities, that the system can be considered resistant to undue political interference.'*

The recommendations in the ESGAB report call for political decision makers to further support the creation of a robust institutional set-up to guarantee that decisions on data sources, methodology and dissemination are in the hands of statisticians. They also emphasize that this should be visible to the public, for example by avoiding changes in top management of statistical authorities during electoral campaigns or shortly after elections. The report stresses that strengthening the co-ordination role of the statistical authorities must be supported by changes in legislation where necessary, and to this end it underlines that the on-going revision of the European Statistics Regulation 223/09 is an opportunity not to be missed. Furthermore by Commitments on Confidence governments can establish strong support to improve the statistical system in their countries. Similarly, a list of improvement actions is needed to complete the Commission decision of 17 September 2012 defining the role and responsibilities of Eurostat within the European Commission.

The National Statistical Institutes and the ESS as a whole face steadily decreasing resources and at the same time the demands for statistics increase. The response to this process must be a systemic change of the business model and decision making process. In this context, according to the ESGAB report, political will and action is needed for removing legislative barriers which hinder exploitation and development of administrative data sources for compiling statistics. The same applies for improving the conditions to exchange micro-data amongst the members of the European Statistical System.

ESGAB's fourth report to the European Parliament and the Council includes a short executive summary with recommendations, country specific observations can be found in the main report. It explores the principles of the Code of Practice that are identified as key elements for the statistical systems: professional independence and quality commitment. Resource issues are examined in the light of cost effectiveness,



European
Statistical
Governance
Advisory
Board

PRESS RELEASE

14 November 2012

confidentiality, accessibility and clarity, all intrinsically linked principles that are crucial for tapping into the potential for improving effectiveness.

Further information

The ESGAB 2012 report with a short executive summary is available on the ESGAB homepage (<http://ec.europa.eu/esgab/>).

Contact for media assistance

To arrange an interview with the ESGAB Chair, Mr Thomas Wieser, please contact the ESGAB secretariat: Heli Lehtimäki (estat-esgab@ec.europa.eu), tel. +352 4301-36484.

About ESGAB

The European Statistical Governance Advisory Board (ESGAB) was established by the European Parliament and the Council in 2008 to provide an independent overview of the implementation of the European Statistics Code of Practice in the European Statistical System. ESGAB's work aims at enhancing professional independence, integrity and accountability of the European Statistical System, key elements of the code of practice, as well as enhancing the quality of European statistics.

ESGAB consists of seven members. Its tasks include the preparation of an annual report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the code of practice insofar as it relates to the Commission (Eurostat) and the European Statistical System as a whole. ESGAB also advises the Commission (Eurostat) on appropriate measures to facilitate the process.

Key concepts

The **European Statistics Code of Practice** is based on 15 principles. Governance and statistical authorities in the European Union undertake to adhere to the principles of the code covering the institutional environment, statistical processes and outputs. A set of indicators of good practice for each principle provides a reference for reviewing the implementation of the code.

Code of practice: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/quality/documents/CoP_October_2011.pdf

The **European Statistical System (ESS)**: the partnership between the Union statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), and the national statistical institutes and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics (see http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/ess_eurostat/introduction).

